

NATIONAL THREAT LANDSCAPE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

This assessment is intended to provide situational awareness of threats with potential national-level implications related to public order and public safety. The information in this assessment is based on reporting from RCMP Divisions, law enforcement partners, searches conducted against RCMP holdings, and open source resources (current as of 29 March, 2022). The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on emerging threats and will provide updates on a periodic or as required basis.

KEY POINTS

- IMCIT assesses that weekly anti-public health order protests will continue in multiple Canadian cities for the near future and are likely to include the use of convoys. Anti-government and anti-authority grievances remain the focus of anti-public health order networks.
- A number of nationwide protests related to environmental and climate change issues are planned throughout April 2022, which may disrupt highways and banks.
- Public order events relating to the Russia-Ukraine conflict are expected to continue until the conflict is resolved. Hate-motivated incidents may occur in relation to this conflict.

THREATS TO PUBLIC SAFETY

COASTAL GASLINK PIPELINE (CGL) OPPOSITION – MORICE RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Potential for continued criminality and solidarity actions which could impact public or officer safety.

A reported violent confrontation in Morice River, British Columbia, which occurred on 17 February 2022, continues to be investigated (See IMCIT STA 2022-11 – 2022-02-24 for details).

During this reporting period the following activities have been observed among Wet'suwet'en supporters:

- On 1 March 2022, an anonymous submission was posted on a Montreal-based anarchist blog claiming that, "...on the night of February 23rd, two dozen anticolonial militants paid a surprise visit to RBC Quebec president [Personal Info.] at her [Personal Info.] [sic] [Personal Info.] home. While Indigenous land defenders and settler accomplices resist wave after wave of colonial assaults to defend the Wet'suwet'en Yintah and the Wedzin Kwa river [sic],

Page 1 of 9

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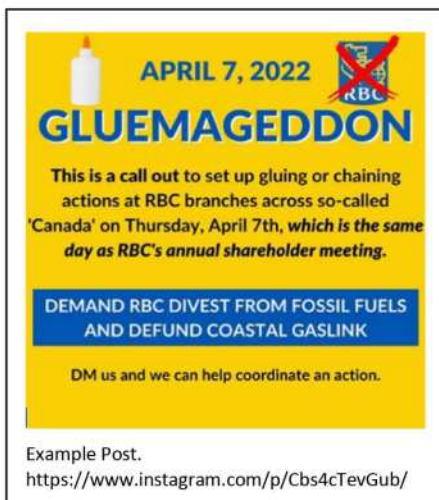
Canada

investors like RBC comfortably profit off of the ongoing genocide of First Peoples and the destruction of unceded land for capitalist extractivist projects.” The blog post included a video of what is believed to be the protest.¹

- Graffiti was painted on a train reading, “Support Wet’suwet’en”. The image was identified on a Montreal-based social media account.²
- A video posted by an international anarchist collective, which documented the International Day Against Police Brutality^a event that took place in Montreal on 15 March 2022, includes a comment about temporarily blocking CN Rail as a “symbolic show of support for Wet’suwet’en land defenders”.³ The video is posted on several anarchist blogs and one blog included the following caption: “...a central theme of the march was the colonial repression faced by Wet’suwet’en land defenders and their supporters at the hands of the RCMP”⁴.

Negative sentiment specifically toward the RCMP continues to be observed on popular social media associated to Wet’suwet’en solidarity. Narratives for this reporting period have focused on claims that the RCMP have been harassing and intimidating people at the camp.⁵

The “No More Dirty Banks” campaign, popularized by celebrity endorsements, was discussed during a virtual press conference on 16 March 2022, involving various climate action groups.⁶ The campaign calls for the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) to stop “financing climate change and indigenous rights violations.”⁷ The upcoming RBC Annual Meeting of Common Shareholders, which is occurring in Toronto, Ontario on 7 April 2022,⁸ was discussed during the campaign’s press conference, where comments were made suggesting that collective demands may be brought at the meeting,⁹ which in turn suggests the potential for a public order event. At this time, the group Extinction Rebellion has planned a protest outside the meeting;¹⁰ however, it is unknown if this event is part of the plans referenced during the press conference.



In addition, a “Day of Action” in front of RBC branches across the country to coincide with the meeting is being planned by climate group Leadnow.¹¹ Specific details are not known at this time. Open source information also suggests the “Glue Yourself To An RBC” campaign will disrupt several RBC branches on 7 April 2022 by blocking entrances to RBC locations.¹²

The IMCIT assesses that, although solidarity protests across Canada have slowed, discussions related to Wet’suwet’en solidarity remain dominant within climate action networks. No further actions of a violent nature, as observed on 17 February 2022 at the CGL site, have been identified nationally.

^a The International Day Against Police Brutality is an annual event held on March 15 which typically attracts populations with grievances that are anti-authority and anarchist in nature.

OLD-GROWTH LOGGING - SOUTHWEST VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA (BC)

Potential for criminality and potential for Canada-wide actions which could impact public or officer safety.

There have been no significant updates regarding the temporary injunction that prohibits the obstruction, impediment, or interference with logging at the Teal-Jones Group site on Vancouver Island, BC, which remains in place.¹³

During this reporting period, however, a call-out was issued on 13 March 2022, from the main social media account associated with Fairy Creek, indicating "camp is now open."¹⁴ Based on open source information, protesters are being instructed to download the Signal mobile messaging app^b in order to communicate securely, resulting in limited open source visibility on specific long-term protest tactics. The Fairy Creek protest has generated significant attention because it is considered the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history (IMCIT Comment: largest in terms of number of arrests, with a total of 1188 individuals being arrested at the Fairy Creek protest site since May of 2021.¹⁵). It is likely that significant public social media activity associated with the protest will continue, but plans for certain tactics will likely be communicated securely via Signal.

Multiple civil disobedience training sessions and actions by the group Save Old Growth also continue to be advertised in BC, where events involving "swarming"^c have occurred during this reporting period. While the tactic of blocking a road is non-violent, potential for altercations between motorists and protesters exist. Highway disruptions by the group Save Old Growth are expected to occur during April of 2022,¹⁶ according to news media, and climate actions by other environmental groups are also planned to occur globally.¹⁷

The IMCIT assesses that public order events specific to old growth logging are currently confined to BC. No ongoing or future planned calls for nationwide solidarity actions have been identified, though occasionally old growth narratives may overlap with other environmental actions occurring elsewhere in Canada.

CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES - NATIONAL MOBILIZATION

Potential for Canada-wide actions which could impact public or officer safety.

Discussions and actions by environmental groups continue to overlap with narratives related to Wet'suwet'en solidarity and the perceived inaction by the federal government to combat climate change. Peaceful "Day of Action for a Just Transition"^d events occurred on 12 March 2022 in several Canadian cities.

^b Signal is an encrypted instant messaging service.

^c Swarming is a tactic where individuals block lanes of an intersection for a few traffic cycles then move off the road

^d *The Just Transition Act* relates to socioeconomic impacts of Canada's climate policies and its commitment to "support the future and livelihood of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon global economy."
<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/roadmap>

Narratives indicating that drastic climate action is needed to secure a livable planet have been observed throughout this reporting period after a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was released in late February of 2022.¹⁸ News reports indicate that the Liberal government will be discussing a climate plan,¹⁹ which will likely affect narratives within environmental groups.

The IMCIT assesses that public order events related to various climate issues will continue throughout Canada.

ANTI-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER

Potential for public health restriction violations. Potential for protests that could impact public or officer safety.

OVERALL NARRATIVES

The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on the evolving anti-government grievances discussed within anti-public health order networks, with the expectation that weekly protests will continue in multiple Canadian cities for the near future and likely include the use of convoys to travel to protest locations. While restrictions have eased in several provinces, opposition to federal mandates continues alongside anti-Liberal narratives regarding perceptions of government overreach and tyranny.

Since the “Freedom Convoy 2022” in Ottawa dispersed at the end of February, current open source information has indicated that the use of “convoys” is a trending tactic. Some events are referred to as “convoys” in advertisements on social media, while others refer to the use of convoys as a means to travel to a protest to appear unified when arriving at a static rallying location. Some events overtly refer to “convoying” as a method to drive through a city in a parade-like procession with vehicles displaying various grievances. These events encompass various grievances that range from anti-Liberal and anti-government to anti-mandate, anti-vaccine, and/or anti-public health order.

The IMCIT assesses that the use of convoys is trending due to the attention the Freedom Convoy 2022 events received and their perceived success in inspiring global support and solidarity. Though numerous “convoy” events have been observed on social media, none at this point have generated the level of attention, nation-wide coordination, attendance and financial support observed with the Freedom Convoy 2022 in Ottawa. In addition, no planned long-term disruptions or preparations have been observed in relation to these ongoing convoy events. Most convoys are happening as part of, or in conjunction with, the weekly protests against public health orders that have been occurring Canada-wide since April of 2020, which are being addressed by the various police of jurisdiction.

While the Freedom Convoy 2022 in Ottawa caused significant disruption and involved the use of tactics that required special operational considerations to remove protesters and vehicles, weekly local anti-public health order protests before and after the convoy in Ottawa have typically been peaceful with no incidents of serious violence. Though these nationally promoted themed events sometimes gain momentum online, no significant differences have been observed between these and the regularly occurring weekly protests that have been ongoing since April of 2020. The following events have occurred or have been noted during this reporting period:

Page 4 of 9

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Irrelevant

- The nationwide “Freedom Chain 2022” events took place on 5 March 2022 with no reports of serious violence.²⁰
- The seventh iteration of the World Wide Freedom Demonstration took place on 19 March 2022 with no major incidents reported.²¹
- Plans for another Freedom Chain event scheduled for 30 April 2022 are circulating within anti-public health order networks.²²
- Currently a “Biker Freedom Convoy”/“Rolling Thunder Ottawa” event for April 29-30 in Ottawa²³ is beginning to circulate within anti-public health order social media. At this time it is difficult to estimate attendance and the level of Canada-wide attention this event will receive.

The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility and liaise with law enforcement partners as chatter surrounding upcoming nationally promoted events evolves.

Multiple federal and provincial Bills (specifically, Bill S-233, Bill C-11, and Bill C-36) ^e have gained attention within anti-public health order networks during this reporting period. Some narratives assert that news coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is distracting the Canadian public while these Bills are being passed. The overall perception within anti-public health order networks is that these Bills pose threats to Canadian rights and freedoms.

CONSPIRATORIAL RHETORIC

The presence of QAnon-inspired and related conspiratorial rhetoric has been noted at some public order events involving anti-public health order grievances and is expected to persist in the future. While the majority of protesters attending anti-public health order events are likely not overt adherents to the QAnon movement, it is likely that aspects of the anti-public health order movement have been inspired by misinformation amplified by the QAnon conspiracy theories.²⁴ In some anti-public health order networks, rhetoric has moved beyond



^e Bill S-233 “An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income”

<https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/44-1/s-233> is being criticized within anti-public health order spaces as being communist. Bill C-11, “An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts” aka Online Streaming Act <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-11/first-reading> is being perceived as media censorship that will eliminate alternative media.

Bill C-36 “An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act and to make related amendments to another Act - hate propaganda, hate crimes and hate speech” <https://globalnews.ca/news/8595683/anti-hate-bill-c-36-liberals/> is being perceived as giving the ability to be taken to court for something you haven't said.

discussions about the pandemic towards topics that are not related to health, marking a shift in focus in spaces previously devoted to opposing pandemic-related restrictions.

The invocation of the *Emergencies Act* to enforce against occupation-style protests in Ottawa on 14 February 2022 resulted in several conspiracy-based influencers framing the use of the *Act* and the removal of protesters by police as unlawful authoritarianism or government tyranny²⁵. These narratives continue to circulate on social media in local convoy groups, especially in reaction to police laying charges against key convoy organizers. Anti-authority narratives denouncing the government's use of the *Act* bolster conspiratorial beliefs depicting the government and law enforcement agencies as oppressors of free speech and human rights, and suggesting that the "deep state" will arrest or use force against citizens, or freeze their financial assets when threatened.

Additionally, the Liberal Party of Canada's announcement of a "supply-and-confidence" agreement with the New Democratic Party in Parliament until 2025²⁶ has fueled conspiratorial and anti-government rhetoric, which allege that the Liberal government is using anti-democratic and authoritarian tactics to remain in power indefinitely.

As public health restrictions begin to lift across regions in Canada, anti-government sentiments partially inspired by the QAnon movement will likely persist and may pose challenges for law enforcement in instances where the lawful authority of police are disregarded by individuals who may then be subject to arrest or intervention. The adoption of "sovereign citizen-style" pseudo-legal jargon and tactics have been observed in some conspiratorial networks and may pose additional challenges for law enforcement.

THREATS OF CRIMINALITY

While the majority of anti-public health order protests have been observed as peaceful, the following incidents involving criminality at these public order events have been observed during this reporting period:

- On 5 March 2022, Calgary Police arrested one person after allegedly shoving a counter-protester to the ground at a weekly-occurring anti-mandate protest.²⁷
- On 10 March 2022, RCMP attended Kelowna City Hall where an individual attempted to perform a citizen's arrest of staff members present. Police did not lay charges as a result of this incident, however, this individual faces previous charges stemming from anti-public health order protests in 2021.²⁸
- On 19 March 2022, Calgary Police arrested six individuals at an anti-mandate protest. Five people were charged for breaching a court injunction prohibiting excessive noise and vehicle blockades. One person was also charged with assaulting a police officer and another individual was arrested on an outstanding warrant.²⁹
- On 23 March 2022, RCMP and Halifax Police arrested and charged two individuals with criminal harassment, mischief, harassing phone calls, and intimidation of a health professional after protests were held outside the home of Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health.³⁰

Page 6 of 9

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- On 26 March 2022, Calgary Police attended an anti-mandate protest and arrested one person for breaching an injunction, and arrested another person on outstanding warrants.³¹

Globally, the Freedom Convoy 2022 in Canada inspired several similar protests worldwide, including in Australia³² and New Zealand,³³ which have all largely been cleared. The largest remaining event is the “People’s Convoy” encamped outside of Washington, D.C., which is expected to disperse in the next few days.³⁴ The People’s Convoy has largely been unwilling to go into D.C. proper and has caused minimal disruptions to the American capital,³⁵ although, there have been several violent incidents related to the convoy, including multiple reported hit-and-runs and a motorcyclist being assaulted.³⁶ News media has reported that the US convoy has attracted participation from the Proud Boys,³⁷ Boogaloo Bois,³⁸ Three Percenters,³⁹ and QAnon conspiracy theorists.⁴⁰

The IMCIT remains attuned to changes in the threat environment with respect to anti-public health order organizing and will report on any upcoming events that gain significant nationwide traction.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT – IMPACT ON THE IDEOLOGICALLY-MOTIVATED THREAT LANDSCAPE *Potential for protests that could impact public or officer safety.*

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is dominating news coverage and has been discussed within some ideologically-motivated online spaces which may polarize opinions of the conflict in Canada.^f Public order events in solidarity with the Ukrainian people have been held in multiple cities internationally; these are expected to continue until the conflict is resolved. There is a possibility that supporters on either side of the Russia-Ukraine conflict may engage in acts of violence or criminality in Canada.

During this reporting period, the following incidents possibly related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict have occurred:

- In early March of 2022, the Calgary Police Service reported investigating potential hate speech targeting Russo-Calgarians on social media.⁴¹
- On 9 March 2022, a group of individuals donning Ukrainian flags were allegedly assaulted by Russian-speaking individuals outside a hockey game in Edmonton.⁴²

Globally, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict has attracted attention within accelerationist, white supremacist, and Neo-Nazi ideologically motivated networks.⁴³ Narratives expressing an interest in traveling to Ukraine, either to fight against Russia or to develop combat skills, have been reported in these networks, though only a small number are confirmed to have actually done so.⁴⁴ Online discussions promoting QAnon conspiracies have largely sided with Russia in the ongoing conflict, and are reported to be amplifying Russian propaganda.⁴⁵ QAnon and adjacent conspiracy theories continue to blend with anti-public health, sovereign citizen, and ethno-nationalist narratives.

^f For additional analysis of conspiratorial rhetoric on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, see IMCIT STA 2022-12 (2022-03-02).

The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on emerging threat issues and will provide updates as required.

Issued by: Ideologically Motivated Criminal Intelligence Team (IMCIT)

Approved by: Director, Directorate of Strategic Intelligence, Federal Policing National Intelligence

- ¹ <https://mtlcounterinfo.org/rbc-quebec-president-evening-home-visit-video/>
- ² <https://www.instagram.com/p/CalZqweMSQ/>
- ³ <https://sub.media/in-montreal-everyone-still-hates-the-police/>
- ⁴ <https://mtlcounterinfo.org/in-montreal-everyone-still-hates-the-police/>
- ⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca87rzmANu5/>
- ⁶ <https://globalnews.ca/news/8687345/hollywood-celebrities-mark-ruffalo-leonardo-dicaprio-rbc-coastal-gaslink-bc/>
- ⁷ <https://www.nomoredirtybanks.com>
- ⁸ <https://www.rbc.com/investor-relations/annual-meetings.html>
- ⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqbf-FadSHY>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/events/974557126756341>
- ¹¹ https://act.leadnow.ca/volunteer-events/RBC-AGM-2022/?fbclid=IwAR13WvygptEkFDEbEZ61vs5nHT58VBx383a9Yfv7dkvhfM_Dvm4f3bJl5pw
- ¹² <https://www.instagram.com/stories/glueyourselftoanrbc/2804158028641642917/>
- ¹³ <https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/court-reserves-injunction-decision-in-fairy-creek-old-growth-logging-protests-1.5669739>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbDzmyAviqx/>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.saanichnews.com/news/police-enforcement-at-fairy-creek-watershed-cost-canadians-over-10-million/>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cbc4eIYrMQg/>
- ¹⁷ <https://nationalpost.com/globe-newswire/citizens-in-9-countries-plan-historic-wave-of-climate-civil-disobedience>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/ipcc-climate-change-canada-1.6367036>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/climate-change-canada-emissions-1.6397776>
- ²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/310624427062402/posts/518867122904797/>
- ²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/310624427062402/posts/518741399584036/>
- ²² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/717707889614060/posts/724139882304194/>
- ²³ <https://www.facebook.com/stephen.rogerson.7/posts/4864750553578953>;
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=4868885593165449&set=g.310624427062402>
- ²⁴ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/qanon-anti-vax-covid-vaccine-conspiracy-theory-1125197/>
- ²⁵ <https://www.vice.com/en/article/93bzk5/freedom-convoy-conspiracy-theorists-are-losing-it-over-trudeaus-emergencies-act>
- ²⁶ <https://globalnews.ca/news/8700158/trudeau-singh-liberals-ndp-tentative-deal/>
- ²⁷ <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/freedom-rally-aggression-escalates-towards-beltline-counter-protesters>
- ²⁸ <https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/362491/COVID-protest-leader-tries-to-make-citizens-arrest-at-Kelowna-city-hall-during-mask-dispute>
- ²⁹ <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2022/03/19/real-toxic-mix-residents-of-calgary-neighbourhood-fed-up-with-protests.html>
- ³⁰ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/strang-protest-arrests-1.6394251>
- ³¹ <https://globalnews.ca/news/8712840/calgary-police-arrest-1-person-ongoing-downtown-protests/>
- ³² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-04/police-remove-camping-items-convoy-to-canberra-protesters/100804310>
- ³³ <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2022/03/03/canadian-inspired-freedom-convoy-ends-in-violence-in-new-zealand.html>
- ³⁴ <https://www.thedailybeast.com/peoples-convoy-gives-up-will-leave-washington-dc-area-after-three-weeks-of-doing-nothing>
- ³⁵ <https://www.newsweek.com/peoples-convoy-fails-block-dc-beltway-fourth-day-row-1686545>
- ³⁶ <https://www.thedailybeast.com/peoples-convoy-pins-down-biker-in-altercation> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/03/25/convoy-protest-assault-dc/>
- ³⁷ <https://www.newsweek.com/proud-boys-member-reportedly-organizing-peoples-convoy-washington-1680076>
- ³⁸ **Personal Info.** [REDACTED]
- ³⁹ <https://www.adl.org/blog/peoples-convoy-trucker-protest-gains-support-from-some-right-wing-extremists>

Page 8 of 9

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⁴⁰ <https://www.logically.ai/articles/follow-the-leader-tracking-the-peoples-convoy-online>

⁴¹ <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/police-investigate-reports-of-hate-speech-targeting-the-russian-calgarian-community>

⁴² <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/ukrainian-organizations-call-on-edmonton-police-to-investigate-assault-at-rogers-place-as-a-hate-crime>

⁴³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/14/neo-nazi-ukraine-war/> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/world/europe/militias-russia-ukraine.html>

⁴⁴ See for example <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/american-military-volunteers-ukraine.html> ;
<https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/among-ukraines-foreign-fighters>

⁴⁵ <https://www.politico.eu/article/antivax-conspiracy-lean-pro-kremlin-propaganda-ukraine/> ;
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